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SUBJECT: ROOTING OUT TRAFFICKING IN ANDHRA PRADESH

REF: CHENNAI 77

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On January 29, G/TIP Trafficking in Persons Coordinator Gayatri Patel and Embassy INL officer met with NGOs and law enforcement officials in Hyderabad, the capital of the south India state of Andhra Pradesh (AP), to review projects to combat the trafficking of women and children into prostitution and forced labor. Their visit followed the recent announcement by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) of the establishment of Anti-Trafficking Units in AP. The AP state police have welcomed UNODC's selection of Andhra Pradesh as one of the focus states, and NGOs are positive about new policy changes by enforcement authorities to curb trafficking perpetrators. With the assistance of the Anti-Trafficking Units, state police have arrested as many as 122 suspects in January 2007, a positive trend which is likely to continue in the coming months.

USG CONTRIBUTES TO LARGEST LAW ENFORCEMENT TIP PROJECT

¶2. (SBU) On January 22, the UNODC and the Andhra Pradesh government announced the opening of the first of three Anti-Human Trafficking Units to train law enforcement officials on various aspects of human trafficking. This positive development is a result of a 2005 agreement between the United States, India, and the UNODC to train and sensitize Indian law enforcement officials and prosecutors to work with victims of human trafficking and to bring to justice those who abuse them. In addition to Andhra Pradesh, the units also are targeting other focus states prone to trafficking, including Bihar, Goa, Maharashtra, and West Bengal. With a USG contribution of \$2.5 million, this is the single largest anti-trafficking project in the world. Under the agreement, the UNODC will implement the project and the Government of India (GOI) will chair the planning and implementation meetings to establish the Anti-Trafficking Units.

NGOS FIGHTING AGAINST CHILD LABOR, TRAFFICKING

¶3. (U) In a late January meeting in Hyderabad with the M V Foundation (MVF), an NGO that deals with the twin problems of child labor and illiteracy, contacts revealed that many of the children trafficked from Bihar are sent into construction work in Andhra Pradesh. MVF focuses its activities on releasing children from labor, rehabilitation, and it uses its bridge schools to mainstream children back into formal schools. The visiting USG team toured a canteen/food parlor run by trafficked victims who earn about \$55 (Rs. 2,500) per month. This is a project of local NGO Ankuram, assisted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), aimed at helping trafficking victims become economically independent.

¶4. (U) In Hyderabad, the USG team also visited Prajwala Astha Nivas, a home for child survivors of sex trafficking, and Prajwala

Enterprises, a training and production center for young female survivors of sex trafficking. The Astha Niwas home now care for 120 children between the ages 3 and 15 years, most of whom are the children of sex workers and are HIV positive. Astha Niwas also is a school for these children, and it offers a safe and secure family-like environment for them to grow and develop, despite their traumatic experiences. Prajwala Enterprises is a training and production unit created in 2004 as an economic empowerment program for survivors of sex trafficking. Over 200 young women survivors of commercial sexual exploitation between 18 and 35 years of age have undergone training there based on their aptitude in trades such as welding, carpentry, fabrication, photo lamination, screen printing, off-set printing, and book binding. After three months of training the women become full-time workers and are involved in all stages of production process. Prajwala's project is a prime example of rescue, rehabilitation of women and children, and economic empowerment of trafficked victims.

ANDHRA PRADESH GOVT. AND POLICE TAKE ON TRAFFICKING

15. (SBU) In a meeting with the USG visitors, Mr. Basith, AP Director General of Police, questioned the suggestion that inadequate governmental efforts to combat trafficking created huge challenges for NGOs providing support like trauma care, health, education, and livelihood skills to victims. DGP Basith said he considers the UNODC project a "double-edged weapon for curbing the evil of trafficking." As part of the Anti-Trafficking Units project, the Crime Investigation Department of the AP Police has created a Compendium of Instructions to cover all aspects of anti-human trafficking as well as the role of the police in rescue and arrest operations and the Department of Women and Child Welfare, NGOs, and other government departments. The Department of Women and Child Welfare also has been at the forefront of the AP state government's

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efforts to combat trafficking by forming one of the first anti-trafficking committees and campaigning at the district level against trafficking of adolescent girls.

16. (SBU) In reviewing the state's legal system to prosecute traffickers, NGO representatives consider the use of non-bailable sections like 366A, 372, 373, 376, etc. of the Indian Penal Code a positive step. Earlier, cases were booked under the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act which permitted the traffickers to obtain release on bail within 48 hours. NGOs also informed the visitors that the AP government now offers Rs. 10,000 in compensation to TIP victims, similar to that available to victims under the Bonded Labor Act.

17. (SBU) In 2006, the district police in AP Nalgonda district received the Civil Rights Award and the Motorola Webber Seavy Law Enforcement Award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), based in Virginia. The awards recognized their Project Aasara, an initiative to combat organized prostitution by partnering with education, women, and child welfare departments as well as with local NGOs. In Nalgonda, some of the main perpetrators of trafficking are the Domras, a backward caste community practicing traditional customs of prostitution. USAID has also supported these anti-trafficking efforts through projects like Aasara and the Child and Police Project (CAP) which have reached out to 150 Domra families to successfully curb third generation trafficking.

18. (SBU) COMMENT: With the USG funded and UNODC initiated Anti-Trafficking Units, we certainly can expect more traffickers to be arrested in Andhra Pradesh and, eventually, across India. The AP state police appeared satisfied on their efforts to support the UNODC project and their achievement of tangible results. This includes arrests of 122 traffickers, brothel owners, and agents in January 2007. Previously, police had arrested several other traffickers and rescued numerous victims (reftel). Mr. Umapathi, the senior AP state government official in charge of anti-trafficking activities, projects the arrest of least a thousand traffickers by the end of the year. He says with stronger systems in place to provide witness protection and victim support, arresting traffickers becomes much easier. While human trafficking remains a

serious concern in Andhra Pradesh and India, efforts like the UNODC project demonstrate the positive impact that trained law enforcement officials can have by working together with government departments, NGOs, and community players. END COMMENT.

19. (U) This message was coordinated with Embassy New Delhi.

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